Heads Up!

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

"Tip Sheet" for Students (2002-03)

This tip sheet, provided by the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC), is intended to be a quick reference only. Be sure to read carefully ALL the instructions in your FAFSA booklet. You can find additional information and links on CSAC's Web site at *www.csac.ca.gov*.

California students must file two forms: a FAFSA and a GPA Verification Form, by March 2, 2002, to qualify for state-sponsored grant programs including Cal Grants.

Apply for financial aid immediately. Don't wait until you've been accepted into a college or you or your parents file year-end tax returns. You may use estimates from December pay stubs and other end-of-year records, which can be corrected later when you receive your Student Aid Report (SAR).

Before You Begin

Allow time to gather records of income earned in calendar year 2001 for your 2002–03 FAFSA. Gather all of the following that apply to you:

✔ Your Social Security card and driver's license or State ID;

✔ W-2 form(s) or other records of income earned;

✔ Your federal income tax return, and your spouse's if you are married;

✔ Your parent(s)' federal income tax return;

✔ Records of other untaxed income received such as welfare benefits (including TANF), Social Security benefits, child support received, payments to IRAs or 401(k)s, or military or clergy allowances;

✔ Current bank statements and records of stocks, bonds and other investments;

✔ Business or farm records, if applicable;

✔ Your Alien Registration number (if you are not a U.S. citizen).

Note: Fill out worksheets A, B and C on page 8 before you answer questions 44-46 and 78-80.

With a PIN, You Can Quickly File Online

You can file your FAFSA online quickly and conveniently (and we hope you do). All you have to do is:

✔ Go on the Web at *www.fafsa.ed.gov*, follow the prompts and get a Personal Identification Number (PIN). Your parents need to set up a PIN, also.

✔ Fill out the FAFSA at the same Web site as above and submit it. If you use a PIN when filing online, you don't have to sign and mail in a signature page.

Note: You may find it helpful to complete the FAFSA on paper form first before going online.

Remember, it's not called the FREE Application for Federal Student Aid for nothing. There is *no* charge to file on-line if you access the FAFSA from *www.fafsa.ed.gov*. (Avoid sites that charge you for this service.) For links to free scholarship search sites, try *www.finaid.org*.

Once You've Completed the Form

In most cases, both you and your parents must sign the FAFSA, or the signature page if you are filing online at *www.fafsa.ed.gov* and don't have a PIN. Unsigned forms will *not* be processed.

If you are mailing your forms, be sure to get a Certificate of Mailing (75 cents) from the U.S. Postal Service as evidence that your FAFSA documents were sent on time.

Filing a FAFSA generates a Student Aid Report (SAR) that will be sent to you. If you have not received your SAR within four weeks of submitting your FAFSA, it is important to call (800) 4-FED AID (that's 800-433-3243) to ask about the delay.

And finally, if you have any questions, need any clarification about the FAFSA, or need a paper form, be sure to contact your high school counselor or financial aid office.